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FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

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28th PLENARY MEETING

Wednesday, 13 October 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. MOSES (Federated States of Micronesia): On behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia, I am honoured this morning to address the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, and I bring the warm greetings of our President and our people.

Given the many challenges facing the Organization and the entire world in the coming year, we are pleased by your election, Mr. President. You have our confidence and support as you assume this high office, so ably discharged by your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev, who enjoyed our respect and gratitude.

Special recognition must also be given to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, under whose leadership the United Nations has taken difficult steps in a process of redefinition and reorganization, which is necessary if we are to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the new world order and work together in the interests of all mankind.

During the past year we have seen the membership of the United Nations draw ever closer to the goal of universality. We thus congratulate the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Eritrea, Monaco and Andorra, and to each of them we extend a welcome and pledge cooperation and friendship.

Our people are deeply saddened by the loss of life and the suffering caused by the earthquake in India last month, and we express to the Indian people our sincere sympathy and pledge to them that we will participate in any effort undertaken by this Organization.

Not many years ago, the appropriate role of the "micro-States" within the world community was to be seen but seldom heard, and even to be excluded from many forums. In our own small island developing State, we, as the body politic of a classic "micro-State", hesitated to assert our views on international affairs, thinking that a small nation could not make a difference in or have an impact upon the resolution of global issues.

Today I draw attention to a significant but less noticeable feature of the new order. Throughout history, international relations have been conducted on a competitive basis, where power and size made a difference. But I am happy to note that things have changed for the better, that a change has begun to take place; and I think it is one that has gathered increased momentum even within the past few years. Nations large and small, in the process of working together under the Charter, have begun to focus their attention and direct their efforts along the lines of commonality of interests and problems - and not merely to pay lip-service. Indeed there is a growing, genuine phenomenon, which is seen partly in the unfolding of events in New York, but even more clearly in the impressive outcomes of the Rio Conference on Environment and Development and the recent World Conference on Human Rights. Another sign is the entire

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world community's keen anticipation of the upcoming Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development.

I do not mean to suggest a disappearance of national interests; but, across a wide spectrum of social, development and even security matters, there is a growing recognition that common interests give strength to new alliances on an inclusive rather than exclusive basis. Thus, there is good reason for continued progress towards self-determination among peoples, since they can now be confident that they will not be alone in addressing the great difficulties of starting out. For similar reasons, many of the "micro-States" have concluded recently that membership in this Organization is imperative, despite the burdens and responsibilities involved.

As this session of the General Assembly proceeds, we are becoming aware of the changes in the Organization in terms of organization, administration and policy. There may be some who doubt that Members have the will or commitment to achieve consensus on these changes and to re-establish the proper financial basis for a United Nations that can be responsive to the present. I submit, however, that any such doubts must be dispelled during our work here in the coming months, for we simply cannot afford to fail. The United Nations is no longer an optional feature of the international community. The common concerns of mankind in the great issues to which I alluded earlier cannot be addressed from behind national fences. And so, I appeal to all Members to commit themselves fully to reaching at this session the goal of preparing the United Nations to become the central instrument through which we can work to secure the future well-being of our peoples.

I believe that the direct experience of my country within our brief time as a Member provides unmistakable evidence of the strength of concerted, international action. Only a few years ago, having emerged from colonialism, our best hopes for development lay in dependence for an indefinite period on the generosity of a few friends, chief among them the United States. Moreover, as inhabitants of small, low-lying islands, we were helpless in the face of the looming threat of sea-level rise and other natural disasters caused by human-induced climate change.

Today, through the work of this body and with our participation, the special development needs and environmental concerns of all small island developing States are being carefully addressed in a number of settings, including the Conventions on climate change and biodiversity and the follow-up activities of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The early work of the Commission on Sustainable Development promises attention to our problems, as can be seen in the upcoming first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

All this is not happening because of an outburst of charitable sympathy by the developed countries, but rather in the context of addressing a complex of issues in which peoples everywhere have a stake. Herein, I think, lies the real strength and value of the United Nations - to us and to all.

During the past year, my Government has found encouragement in the ways in which this Organization as a whole recognizes the difficulties that small States encounter as they try to participate fully in its work. We deeply appreciate the opportunities afforded to us through the contribution of Members to voluntary funds that have enabled our participation in important functions. We also acknowledge the instances where calls by small States for the holding of meetings here in New York to make our presence possible have been heard. Furthermore, we appreciate that, whenever possible, special measures for our benefit - such as limiting the number of simultaneous meetings - are being taken.

For our part, small States are now more often coming together on common issues to speak with one voice for greater effectiveness and efficiency. Here, I cite the Alliance of Small Island States as a successful example on the issue of climate change and other UNCED-related matters. In a more general sense, the regional groups operate to the benefit of small States, affording us opportunities of access to elected positions by virtue of allocations and the principle of rotation. I am sure there are other factors favourable to us that I have failed to mention here.

Yet, even with all this, I must state that we are very hard pressed to participate in the broad range of United Nations activities, both financially and owing to the sheer volume and complexity of those activities. For this reason, and because so many other Members are in similar situations, I propose that the United Nations, as part of its reorganization efforts, undertake a comprehensive examination of the obstacles that exist to the full participation of small States with a view towards identifying institutional rather than ad hoc solutions. After all, achieving universality in the United Nations would be

a hollow accomplishment so long as a significant number of Members remain incapable of reaching their effective potential within the Organization. We look forward to addressing this issue during the course of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

My country is a member of the South Pacific Forum, an organization of Governments of Pacific island countries which, each year prior to this date, meets to address matters of concern to our region and to provide an expression of our joint views on many issues before this body. I wish to state our complete solidarity with that expression, contained in the communiqué from our recent meeting in the Republic of Nauru, which will be presented for incorporation in the records of this Assembly.

The Forum members have been outspoken in opposing the testing of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Our optimism ran very high at the Nauru meeting because it seemed that at last the nuclear Powers had found the resolve to bring this dangerous chapter of history to an end. Now, with reports of a recent test by one of them, the Federated States of Micronesia is deeply concerned that the great progress made towards achieving a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty will be reversed. We call on all nuclear Powers not to treat this recent aberration as an incentive to turn backwards, but rather to restore and hold to their collective discipline.

The issue of fundamental human rights is interwoven into every aspect of the activities undertaken by this body. For too long many Governments have been content to avoid confronting it directly as a matter of multilateral responsibility. I am glad to say that we sense some improvement in the situation despite continuing occurrences of the most repugnant kinds of human rights violations.

In this decade, we have witnessed unprecedented changes in world conditions, brought about in part by a growing unanimity of resolve among peoples to express and exercise their fundamental human rights. Recently, prominent States have been dismantled, leading to the formation of other States that afford broader opportunities for the expression of these rights. Sadly, at the same time, other States continue to go to great lengths to suppress them. The world finds itself rejoicing in newly established freedoms but also feeling deep revulsion over atrocities and repression of shocking magnitude. If any lesson emerges from this dichotomy, it must be that isolated progress is not enough and that fundamental human rights issues can no longer be relegated to the background in a set of supposedly higher multilateral priorities. Rather, human rights must be the cornerstone of our work, which must be guided by the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Accordingly, my Government expresses its support for the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action agreed upon at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June this year. We support the adoption of that Declaration by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

In keeping with the principles of that Declaration, I wish to affirm my Government's strong and unconditional support for the universality of human rights and for the effective multilateral instruments that give meaning and definition to the concept.

As an early priority, our new nation has undertaken a close examination of the existing instruments with a view to freely assuming obligations under them, as is consistent with our Constitution. As a first step, we have acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and we anticipate further action on other instruments as well.

One of the very important concerns that is interlinked with all our Government's hopes for a better future is the rights of women. We fully support the development of effective new instruments in the cause of women's rights in order to secure their protection against discrimination and abuse.

As a nation comprised entirely of indigenous peoples, my Government also expresses its solidarity with all indigenous peoples of the world and particularly those subjected to deprivation of their fundamental human rights within their own homelands.

In this the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism it is important that this body redouble its efforts to ensure that the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories are given every opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination and self-government. While the obstacles to self-determination for the remaining Territories are minor compared to those that are being confronted so dramatically in Eastern Europe and in Palestine, it remains our moral responsibility to support the right to self-determination for all peoples under colonial administration.

Today, the enlarged membership of the United Nations is in itself strong testimony to the success of

decolonization; let us hark back to our own earlier struggles and recommit ourselves to the complete elimination of colonialism.

My Government welcomes the establishment of the International Tribunal, and the recent election of its members, to try perpetrators of war crimes in the former Republic of Yugoslavia. Still, we would support the establishment of a permanent international human rights tribunal. The independent, juridical composition of any such body should place it above concerns regarding political intervention while denying human rights violators any refuge from defined international responsibility.

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia attaches great importance to the issue of fundamental human rights, and will continue to participate in the work of this body towards a world community in which all peoples live without threat of encroachment upon these fundamental rights.

It has been well established by actions of this body that the right to development is itself a fundamental human right. But to recognize a right is one thing: to secure the exercise of that right is much more difficult. A great deal is said and done here at the United Nations every year to address the needs of developing countries and peoples, not to mention the considerable resources that are mobilized bilaterally towards that end. Yet we continue to see wide variations in the degree of effectiveness of that assistance and in the results of efforts by developing countries themselves.

This has led an increasing number of us to question whether there might not exist a number of identifiable factors that prevent development efforts from achieving success. If those factors could be defined with precision and recognized where they are present, it might well be possible to attain significant increases in economies and outcomes. On Papua New Guinea's welcome suggestion, and with its welcome leadership - and after considerable discussion and extensive exchanges of views between eminent leaders in the developing world - this matter has been placed before the Assembly as agenda item 151, entitled "United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation". We shall join others in sponsoring a draft resolution to be presented under this item and calling for a comprehensive, systematic and thorough study of the encumbrances to full opportunity and participation in development, with particular reference to the economies of developing countries. If properly supported and carried out, this initiative would make possible significant breakthroughs in the effort to secure this important and fundamental human right, with equality and equity for all.

The Federated States of Micronesia pays a tribute to the enlightened men and women who gave life to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) process and focused the world's attention on the need to begin replacing wasteful and polluting practices with sustainable development. This movement is especially well-timed for my country, since our development planning is still in the early stages and, as a consequence, and with the encouragement and support of the world community, we now have in place a national environmental management strategy that provides an essential complement to our development-planning efforts.

We intend for our country to become a model of effective partnership with other nations, and with this body, demonstrating the application of new, clean technologies in order to accommodate sustainable development within a small, pristine environment.

Of course, as a nation of remote and widely dispersed small islands, many of which are low-lying atolls, we experience all the difficulties recognized in section G of chapter 17 of Agenda 21 as inhibiting the development of small island countries. Thus, we are thankful for the opportunity now before us to enhance general understanding of those difficulties through the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States.

As a member of the Alliance of Small Island States, we are participating fully in that process. It was most encouraging to note, at the recent preparatory conference, the strong participation by developed countries and also the solid support from our colleagues in the Group of 77. We shall fully reciprocate that support in all appropriate settings because, despite our awareness of our own problems, we know that virtually all developing countries exhibit one or more disabling characteristics that distinguish them from the others. While we are part of a relatively large grouping of countries that share similar characteristics and disabilities, all developing countries deserve to have attention paid to their particular obstacles to development.

In that light, we perceive the Barbados Conference next year as an important early milestone in the post-Rio process, not only for small island developing States but for all nations, developed and developing, that believe as we do in the Rio Declaration and in Agenda 21. The

Barbados Conference is, in our view, the first real test of Agenda 21.

It may seem at times that we of the region of the Pacific islands are overly-preoccupied about our environment, and that we take too broad a view of the potential impact resulting from the actions of others. We raise our voices loudly and often on the subject of human-induced climate change and sea-level rise, but many say that it may not happen. We speak out against nuclear testing, especially in and among our islands, but those who are more powerful say that it probably is not harmful. We strongly urge that lethal toxic substances such as plutonium and chemical weapons not be transported through or stored within our region, but even some of our closest friends do so regardless, insisting that in all likelihood there is no danger. Are we too concerned? Are we naive? I believe that we are not, because the Pacific region appears to be a vast, thinly populated ocean area and thus a prime location for the dirty business of others - but that region is our home and our responsibility.

Not only must we provide for ourselves from its bounty, but we are also stewards of what is coming to be recognized in scientific circles as the last remaining great unspoiled natural resource of the planet. Our fisheries are plentiful, but they could be threatened if experiences elsewhere in the world are repeated. Our air is still clean, but we now know we are vulnerable to occurrences elsewhere. Our water is still pure, but we have seen other seas contaminated by unsustainable practices. We must, and will continue to, speak out.

Our region is not simply the victim of the callous disregard of the powerful for the consequences visited upon the poor or the weak. Rather, we recognize that for centuries mankind has regarded the vast oceans as free space, open to all passage and exploitation. Although exclusive economic zones and multilateral treaties have had major impact, the fact remains that the Pacific Ocean is today the world's ultimate "back yard".

My country's plea, then, is quite simple and straightforward. We call on all members of the world community to join us, in the spirit of Rio, in a true partnership for the sustainable development, not just of one or more Pacific island countries, but of our ocean and all that is in it. One important focus must, of course, be upon the land and coastal areas within our region, in order to accommodate appropriate development without degrading either the land or its surrounding marine space. But another, broader, focus must be on the ocean itself - to respect and build upon the growing scientific knowledge of its complex ecological systems.

It is well known that the Federated States of Micronesia, along with other low-lying island countries of the World, is literally frightened that its scarce land space may be made uninhabitable and ultimately disappear if even the moderate predictions of global warming and sea-level rise come to pass. But if this were the only concern with regard to human-induced climate change, loss of biodiversity and unsustainable development, we would be hard put to call upon the world at large to make fundamental changes in the way it lives. Ours, however, is by no means an isolated concern. As the South Pacific Forum Heads of Government have stressed for some years, the fate of the islands is an advance warning of things to come, as we have predicted.

Thanks to the trends that I discussed earlier in respect of the modern realignment of motivations for international cooperation, I have tremendous confidence that we, and our children and their children, will succeed not only in preserving the environment but also in maintaining the pace towards the ultimate goals of peace, enjoyment of human rights and social enrichment, as enshrined in the Charter. My country pledges its efforts within this great Organization, during this forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and afterwards, towards the attainment of these ends.

Mr. SAEMALA (Solomon Islands): Let me extend to you, Sir, the warm greetings of my Government and the people of Solomon Islands. We congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at this forty-eighth session. Your experience, diplomatic skills and leadership assure us of a successful and fruitful session.

I also join in the tributes paid to your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, for the excellent manner in which he presided over the affairs of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

We join, too, in acknowledging and commending the report (A/48/1) of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Boutros-Boutros Ghali, on the work of the Organization. The report is a comprehensive catalogue of the achievements of the United Nations, its strengths and weaknesses, the threats and opportunities the Organization faces and the challenges it has before it. All these point to one common truth: there is an undeniable disparity between idealism and reality,

between the mounting responsibilities of the Organization and its capacity to achieve pragmatic, focused and specific goals. The gap between promotion of the ideals of the Charter and realization of them continues to widen.

Over the last three weeks, we have heard Member States renewing their support for, and commitment to, this body. It is clear that the Organization is calling out for our attention. It needs us all, just as much as we need it; perhaps it now needs us more than ever before to strengthen it and enhance its performance in its delivery of services and goods to our many peoples around the globe.

Mr. President, your opening statement 22 days ago concluded with the visionary challenge, "We the peoples - united for a better world" *(A/48/PV.1)*. In the spirit of a family of nations, the United Nations will be celebrating this theme at its fiftieth anniversary in 1995. While Solomon Islands shares this vision, it counsels against extravagance, waste and mere symbolistic ceremonials which do not reflect long-term substantive benefits. To mark the occasion with serious reflection, education and communication, careful planning and a wider consultation programme at all levels of the international community will be essential. Awareness programmes and activities aimed at promoting the principle of unity in diversity should be a key to strength and wealth, both for nations and for the global community. A goal which can be promoted during the fiftieth-anniversary celebrations is that of world citizenship, or citizens of planet Earth.

The basis for this should be very simple: everyone living on this planet has a responsibility for its sustainable growth. Everyone must be aware of, and feel concerned at, the possibility of our destroying the planet. Individuals make up communities. Communities make up nations. Nations make up the global community. The global community lives on this planet.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Citizens of Planet Earth, or world citizenship, is a unifying vision of a peaceful, prosperous global society. This emerges from a sense of responsibility and the acceptance of the oneness of humanity. To embrace this vision of world citizenship into the twenty-first century, leaders and Governments must change their attitudes to take on the greatest challenge facing the world community - releasing the enormous financial, technical, human and moral resources required for the sustainable development of our planet. Can we collectively face this challenge in order to implement the various components of Agenda 21? The answer lies in the hands of the people and the nations of the world. How can we make this theme a reality - a reality not only for us at this time but also for future generations on this planet?

I was heartened to hear the President of the United States, Mr. Bill Clinton, say these words on the first day of the general debate:

> "The United States intends to remain engaged and to lead." *(A/48/PV.4, p. 8)*

He also went on to say:

> "... we must and will serve as a fulcrum for change and a pivot point for peace." *(ibid.)*

The Solomon Islands is currently working with the United Nations Development Programme on a pilot programme called "Children of Planet Earth" (COPE). COPE is an environmental educational-awareness programme aimed at primary-school children. It will be incorporated into the school curriculum as a module compulsory for all children. There will be no pass or fail grade, but any child who completes the module will get a United Nations badge or a certificate. The module will focus on the environment and on sustainable growth, and national, regional and international perspectives will be built into it. The Solomon Islands strongly believes that education with regard to the environment is important and deserves priority investment. The target group is the children, because they will be the leaders of tomorrow.

Two weeks ago, His Excellency Shimon Peres, Israeli Foreign Minister, described war and peace in this way:

> "In war, the old bury the young, and in peace, the young bury the old."

I thought this was quite revealing. It tells of a reality, a reality which has written a new chapter with a change of heart. The handshake between Palestine Liberation Organization leader Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Rabin on Capitol Hill symbolized a major milestone in Middle East history. The Solomon Islands welcomes this great advancement in human relations between these two nations. It is hoped that the process of creating forgiveness and trust will pave the way for lasting peace in the Middle East. I applaud the countries that have pledged financial assistance or assistance in kind to Palestine.

The forty-eighth session of the General Assembly opened at the dawn of a new era in South African history. African National Congress leader Mr. Nelson Mandela, renowned for his struggle against apartheid, made a moving statement at this very rostrum requesting the lifting of economic sanctions against South Africa. To see Mr. Mandela and President De Klerk moving towards South Africa's first non-racial elections is an immense and promising change. At last, both leaders have decided to travel in the same bus of democracy. We too join the rest of the world in welcoming this first historic step towards majority rule in South Africa.

The parameters for the global agenda of the United Nations General Assembly have evolved slowly over the years. However, not only have agenda items changed from time to time, but they have increased in number as well. The issues before the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly fall into the following broad categories: first, making and keeping peace; second, arms controls and disarmament; third, economics and development; fourth, global resource management; fifth, human rights and other social issues; sixth, international legal issues; and seventh, financing and administration of the United Nations.

Each of these broad headings receives a thorough survey and analysis at every session of the General Assembly from both the developed and the developing parts of the globe. Some speakers focus specifically on certain issues, such as making and keeping peace, or arms control and disarmament; others draw the General Assembly's attention to such matters as economic development, global-resources management, human rights and other social issues. The debate so far has been interesting.

A quick overview of what has been said so far from this rostrum reveals a global picture that is both bright and gloomy. One truth, articulated by almost every speaker in the area of world peace and security is that the threat of conflicts between States has not diminished, even after the super-Power rivalry has been eroded. Senator Gareth Evans, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, captured the question of world peace and security in a more imperative way when he addressed this Assembly at its 5th meeting, on 27 September. He referred to the resurgence of ethno-nationalism, which often takes a violent form, giving ethnic groups a claim to minority human rights protection as well as a claim to self-determination.

Speaking on behalf of the European Communities, Mr. Willy Claes, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium, patrolled the major trouble spots of the world in a memorandum attached to his statement. The Solomon Islands appreciates the efforts of the European Communities in resolving regional conflicts throughout the world and welcomes its commitment to world peace and security. The Balkan crisis has become a cryptic jigsaw puzzle. Human suffering continues. Peacemakers and peace-keepers have tried, and are still trying, to find a solution. The Solomon Islands deplores the atrocities committed and appeals to the nations with ways and means to bring peace to this region. As peace is being given a chance in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the South Pacific regions, so may it be given a chance in the Balkan region.

In his address to the General Assembly on 28 September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation referred to the Bosnian conflict and remarked:

> "... the key to the settlement of many conflicts has not yet been found." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eight Session, Plenary Meetings, 6th Meeting, p. 15*)

He also said:

> "In any case, it is surely time to think of establishing closer contacts between the United Nations and the world's leading religions." (*ibid., p. 15*)

It appears that there is a missing dimension to the approaches employed in conflict resolution.

As we consider the growing number of problems confronting our world, we cannot escape the feeling that the solutions will not simply be political, economic or social. In many cases, the problems are so complex and so deep-seated that we need superhuman help. A new prescription for true peace must include the development of the spiritual and pastoral well-being of all peoples around the world.

To this important extent, my Government recognizes, as its first principle,

> "the sovereignty of God as the basis of righteousness, justice and dignity in the development of the Solomon Islands and its people."

We realize that neither the individual nor society can achieve full potential without the help of Almighty God. If God is sovereign in the affairs of our world, would we not be wise to bring Him into the planning process as well as give Him a place in the resolution of conflicts, whether national, regional or global?

The question of New Caledonia, in the South Pacific, has been on the agenda of the United Nations for some time - but not for much longer, I hope. Solomon Islands joins its colleagues in the South Pacific region in endorsing the recent report on New Caledonia of the Ministerial Committee of the South Pacific Forum. As a member of that Committee, I hereby humbly express our appreciation and gratitude for the cooperation and support of the French and territorial authorities in facilitating the recent visit of Ministers to the Territory. My Government also reaffirms its strong support for the Committee's recommendations and renews its firm support for the aspirations and goals of the people of New Caledonia, including the Kanak community. We note the progress of the Matignon Accords, and, while sensitive to the varying and conflicting interpretations and expectations, we urge all parties to maintain their commitment to the Matignon process and to the promotion of economic, political and social development in New Caledonia.

The United Nations is a strong supporter of peace. This noble world body has, to date, supported the reunification of the two Germanys and of the two Koreas. In this context, reunification means only one thing - the uniting of people. Unification means peace and coexistence. Conflicts in areas around the world should be resolved through dialogue. Thus, we believe that the United Nations mechanism that was used in the case of Germany and in the case of the two Koreas should be applied to the situation involving the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China.

Solomon Islands recognizes the need for reunification of the two Chinas through good will and in good faith. We call on both to hold talks, on equal terms, on the basis of this important United Nations principle. But the process can be successful only if this world body considers the exceptional situation of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the international context, based on the principle of universality of membership and in accordance with the established model of parallel representation of divided countries at the United Nations.

Solomon Islands fully recognizes and strongly supports the wish of the people of the Republic of China to rejoin the United Nations. As a small, friendly nation with a population of only about 300,000, Solomon Islands firmly believes that the desire of the 21 million people of the Republic of China in Taiwan for their own representation in this world body is reasonable and justified. We are sure that the international community would benefit from the positive contribution that the Republic of China is capable of making to this Organization. Our own country has benefited, in the past 10 years, from the economic development and technological progress that the people of the Republic of China have secured through achieving for their country such a high position in the league of the industrialized nations. Solomon Islands therefore supports the call from other Member States for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to examine the question of the Republic of China rejoining the United Nations.

The mere existence of weapons of mass destruction poses a big threat to global peace and security. However, even more worrying is the potential proliferation of nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic missiles - the danger of their falling into the wrong hands. We applaud the countries that have taken positive steps towards the elimination of these weapons. We also welcome the Secretary-General's report on new dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era. We believe in the integration of arms-regulation efforts into the broader structure of international peace and security, the globalization of arms control and of the disarmament process and the revitalization of arms control. We strongly propose that the arms-control and disarmament agenda clearly reflect the realities of the post-cold-war era. This is the challenge for the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Turning to nuclear testing in our region, I must say that our continuing desire and concern is to ensure that the South Pacific region remains a nuclear-free zone and a zone free of all types of radioactive waste. Solomon Islands therefore maintains its support for further suspension of nuclear testing in our region. We warmly welcome the decisions of the United States, Russia and France to extend their testing moratoriums. In this vein, owing to recent developments, we call upon China and the United Kingdom seriously to consider declaring similar moratoriums.

Solomon Islands is gravely concerned about the dumping of radioactive and other waste at sea. We therefore urge the States parties to the London Dumping Convention of 1972, when they adopt amendments in

November this year, to continue their active support for a total ban on such dumping.

The shipment of plutonium, with the danger that it poses to the fragile marine ecosystem of the South Pacific, is a matter of major concern to the Governments of the region. The highest international safety and security standards must be adhered to. Any nation engaging in this business must satisfactorily address all possible contingencies.

There is a clear message in statements issued by States members of the Group of 77. It points to the increasing connection between environmental concerns and developmental issues, to the delicate balance between the environment and development, between population and development, and between good government and development.

Member countries of the South Pacific Forum were well represented at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. A principal outcome of the Rio Conference is Agenda 21 - an action plan for the 1990s and the twenty-first century. It sets forth strategies and integrated-programme measures to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation and to promote environmentally sound and sustainable development in all countries.

Once again Solomon Islands reaffirms its strong commitment to sustainable development. We believe that sound environmental practices constitute an integral part of the development process. Thus, all development activities pursued must be both economically and ecologically sound. The collective voice of small island developing States is heard through the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) which share unique circumstances, vulnerabilities and limitations. These include their small size and relative geographic remoteness, a narrow range of resources, severe population stress, sometimes minimal renewable fresh water resources, and high degrees of endemism. These pressures and limitations underscore the need for careful and sustainable management of resources to sustain future generations. This point was highlighted in our country's statement last year.

Solomon Islands, like its other South Pacific neighbours, continues to rely heavily, and in some cases totally, on the sea, the land, the rivers, the forests and the air around us for its livelihood and survival. Solomon Islands therefore attaches great importance to environmental issues and accords high priority to collective efforts in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development follow-up activities and the implementation of Agenda 21, including other, associated principles and conventions. Solomon Islands is a party to the Port Vila Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development. We therefore continue to support preparations for the forthcoming two major Conferences in 1994 - the Barbados Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Cairo World Conference on Population and Development.

Solomon Islands is one of the few countries in the South Pacific that now has a national environment management strategy endorsed by the Government. That strategy is now in the implementation phase, in which priority areas for action at the national level have been identified.

Human-induced climate change and its subsequent effect of sea-level rise is perhaps the most intractable threat to human well-being and the survival of many species on Earth. The South Pacific is no exception. Solomon Islands is a signatory of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and will soon complete the necessary requirements for its ratification. The formalities for the ratification of the Montreal Protocol are under way. We warmly welcome the speedy action of the United Nations in establishing a Commission on Sustainable Development and, in particular, we welcome the acceptance of the South Pacific Forum secretariat as a special representative to the Commission and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as an observer in the Commission.

Solomon Islands applauds the initiative taken by the Government of Papua New Guinea in putting forward, through the United Nations system, the agenda item on opportunity and participation. The adverse economic changes in recent years have created difficult circumstances for many small countries. There is a need to identify options in order to make possible participation by Governments and peoples of developing countries on an equal footing. Solomon Islands welcomes the proposal in the Papua New Guinea initiative for the establishment of a panel of experts to study and recommend ways of increasing opportunity and participation for developing countries.

Speaking about Papua New Guinea, I should like to convey Solomon Islands' profound appreciation to the United Nations for the goodwill mission it sent last year to discuss the problems we had encountered at the border

between Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. I am happy to report that the new Solomon Islands Government, through its six-point initiative, is working constructively with its neighbour, Papua New Guinea, to find a lasting peaceful solution to the problems at our border.

Proper management and good fishing practices are essential for the sustainable use of marine living resources. The major income earner of Solomon Islands is fisheries. Solomon Islands supports the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Preparations for its ratification are being considered. The Solomon Islands Government strongly supports the work of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and appeals to distant-water fishing nations to cooperate with the management and conservation measures stipulated by that Agency.

The new Government of Solomon Islands has just officially launched its blueprint document entitled, "Statement of Policies". The Government's philosophy of where and how to steer the country over the next four years is laid out in this document. The Government is embarking on a major programme of economic and social reforms aimed at attaining sustainable development. The ministries responsible are currently discussing and putting together a programme of structural adjustment. The programme emphasizes the sustainable management of natural resources, public-sector reforms and the promotion of private-sector development. It devotes particular attention to the sizes and costs of institutions, and outlines proposals for the redeployment of resources to areas of production and need. The preparation of this programme is expected to be completed by November 1993.

While this exercise is considered to be a long-term viable undertaking, it is necessary to seek external assistance. The Government of Solomon Islands is fully committed to this long-overdue reform, but appeals to international financial institutions and donors to provide financial assistance and advice.

On human rights, the Solomon Islands Government fully supports the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which were the outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights held from 14 to 25 June 1993. Fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual are listed in chapter II, sections 3 to 19 of our national Constitution. We condemn any violation of human rights anywhere in the world. We also join the rest of the world in the promotion of human rights and support those who have spoken in favour of the establishment of a post of high commissioner for human rights. Such a post would indeed be a worthwhile investment.

Solomon Islands also salutes the work and courage of those countries that contribute troops and humanitarian assistance to trouble-spots all over the world. We pray for the souls of those who have died in the field. We strongly deplore the actions of those who have committed atrocities against peace-keepers, Red Cross workers and associated personnel. Solomon Islands therefore strongly supports New Zealand's initiative in requesting the inscription on the General Assembly's agenda of the critical item on the safety of personnel in United Nations peace-keeping operations.

The United Nations Charter has now been physically reduced to a pocket-sized booklet, but the demands the nations of the world place on this global Organization outstrip the limits of its capabilities and the resources at its disposal. Perhaps this is a positive sign - a justification of the need for its continuing existence.

A few more flags have been added at the United Nations this year. We warmly welcome the new Members of the United Nations family and congratulate their Governments and peoples on taking this courageous step.

In 1945 the founders of the United Nations saw the need to set up this body. Today, we are challenged in no uncertain terms to ensure that the work that was begun 48 years ago continues, to keep the Organization alive, relevant, meaningful and cost effective. It is the only hope for world peace and security and for the promotion of democracy, development and global-resource management. Member States request the Organization to be accountable, and so we Member States too must return to it our individual due responsibilities.

May the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations bring a new dawn to human relations between all peoples around the world.

ADDRESS BY MR. GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA, PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Nepal.

Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Nepal, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Nepal, His Excellency The Right Honourable Girija Prasad Koirala, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. KOIRALA (Nepal): I have the honour to convey to the General Assembly greetings from the people and Government of Nepal and the best wishes of His Majesty King Birenda Bir Bikram Shah Dev for the success of its forty-eighth session.

As I stand before members today, my thoughts go back to 1960, when the first elected Prime Minister of Nepal, the late B.P. Koirala, addressed the Assembly and declared that the foreign policy of Nepal was inspired by the purposes and principles of the United Nations. He said then that Nepal looked upon the Organization as an instrument for promoting peace and justice among nations.

The late Prime Minister's visit to the United Nations was an event of historic significance for Nepal. A revolutionary transformation had then taken place in my country. As a result, a conscious and coherent foreign policy, with centrality given to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, had started to take shape.

Similar revolutionary changes again took place in my country in 1990, after a gap of more than three decades. In accordance with the wishes of our people, multiparty democracy has been restored in Nepal. Now there is a constitutional guarantee of human rights and fundamental freedoms. As the second elected Prime Minister to address this body, after 33 years, I must say that this moment has a deep personal overtone for me.

Restoration of multiparty democracy and respect for fundamental human rights does not necessarily mean that we have solved all our problems. The expectations of the people are naturally high, but the means at our disposal are extremely limited.

Faced with such problems, my Government has been making every effort to ensure a better standard of living for our people in larger freedom. Our development plans are based on the premise that it is the individual citizen and not the State which has the right to development. Along with economic liberalization, we are pursuing a people-oriented development policy focused on poverty alleviation. To achieve our goals we have increased investments in human-priority areas. Given the enormous constraints upon us, ranging from lack of resources to the high cost of infrastructure, a shortage of skilled personnel and institutional deficiencies, our problems are daunting. We look forward to greater understanding from donor countries and multilateral agencies in helping us to implement our people-oriented development programmes, in upgrading local skills and in building the capacity to accelerate human development.

The foreign policy of Nepal is guided by the objective of ensuring its sovereignty, political independence and national security while promoting international peace and cooperation. Inspired by the purposes and principles of the United Nations, the policy of non-alignment, and respect for human rights, we seek friendship and cooperation with all countries of the world, and in particular with our neighbours. We have reason to be satisfied with the excellent relations we enjoy with the countries in our immediate neighbourhood. We are partners with our friends in South Asia in an effort to forge a mutually beneficial scheme of cooperation for the welfare of our people under the aegis of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

With the sudden end of the cold war the world is at the threshold of a new era of shared responsibility for global peace and development. The post-cold-war world is very much in need of order, but it is a world that cannot be ordered by military and economic Powers alone. At this time of historic transition, political leadership in all countries must show a higher order of statesmanship. It is time to shed old prejudices and parochialism. We should be able to pool the best of every civilization and culture for the greater good of mankind.

Changes in international relations have also created opportunities to devise new partnership in global responsibility. The world today is poised to consider new approaches to international law based not on unilateralism but on multilateralism. The United Nations is an organization of the powerful and the weak, the large and the small, the wealthy and the poor, each contributing its share to the common interest. It is in the interest of all to make the United Nations an effective and influential agent of constructive change in a turbulent world.

If the United Nations is to fulfil its Charter obligations it must deal with the root causes of conflicts and instability. The mechanisms and processes at its disposal

for achieving that goal must be strengthened and refined. In this context, there are four areas which demand immediate attention: first, international cooperation to combat poverty; secondly, strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security; thirdly, progressive reduction and finally elimination of weapons of mass destruction and, fourthly, universalization of human rights.

Democracy and human rights are easily eroded when widespread poverty prevails. Poverty undermines human dignity, contributes to environmental degradation and undermines the cohesion of a society. It also poses a lasting threat to peace and stability. The search for collective security cannot, therefore, be separated from the sustained efforts to improve the economic and social conditions of peoples everywhere. Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, is a comprehensive blueprint for sustainable development. To turn that vision into reality there is an urgent need for resumption of the North-South dialogue and for economic cooperation between developing nations.

The President returned to the Chair.

In this context, I look forward to the Secretary-General's agenda for development. We sincerely hope that an agenda for development will form the basis of accelerating international cooperation to the mutual benefit of developed and developing countries alike. The upcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women should also be occasions to focus on the human dimensions of socio-economic problems.

In speaking of social and economic issues, I recall the initiative taken by countries of South Asia under the aegis of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to work together for the cause of children. That initiative provided the major motivation for the holding of the World Summit for Children. The mid-decade review in 1995 must be an occasion to evaluate the implementation of the promises the international community made to children at the World Summit. Despite conflicting demands on our limited resources, we in Nepal are allocating an increasing portion of our national budget to child and maternal health and welfare and on other basic human-services areas. We are in favour of the proposal for matching resource allocations by donor countries for such national initiatives.

The dramatic increase in the demands on and heightened expectations of the United Nations is nowhere more compelling than in the area of peace and security. With experience spanning over 35 years in United Nations missions, Nepal welcomes the expansion in the mandates of peace-keeping operations. The recent successes of the missions in El Salvador and Cambodia are testimony to the potential of a United Nations operation with a clearly defined and practicable mandate. The joint venture of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in Haiti is breaking newer ground in international cooperation to restore a democratically elected Government and to protect and promote human rights.

Without minimizing the enormity of the problems the United Nations has to take into account in Somalia, I feel that the emphasis on military action will overshadow the larger goal of the mission in that country. I urge the redoubling of efforts to seek lasting political solutions to the problems in Somalia.

I appeal to the parties concerned in Bosnia and Herzegovina to respond immediately to the successive resolutions of the Security Council and halt the senseless carnage of innocent people. The continuing tragedy in the territory of the former Yugoslavia presents a test-case for viable cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of peace and security.

Nepal will continue to support the further development of preventive diplomacy by the Secretary-General and the Security Council. In the maintenance of peace and security, the implementation of enforcement measures under the Charter should be the step of last resort. It should be the exception to rather than the rule of the game. The real strength of collective security lies in the ability to implement the provisions of the Charter relating to peaceful settlement of disputes.

The grounds for the intervention of the Security Council have also raised questions of consistency. As the principal organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council must act in an even-handed and impartial manner and must be perceived as doing so.

The recent comments of the Secretary-General on the financial situation of the Organization should be a cause of concern to all. Investments in peace-keeping, peacemaking and preventive diplomacy are investments in collective

stability. It is not possible for the United Nations to play its role without adequate resources.

Along with other non-aligned countries, Nepal has always subscribed to the call for a more active United Nations role in arms control and disarmament. Since mutual fear is the source of any arms race, confidence-building measures must be seriously pursued in order to achieve the goals of disarmament. Nations should pursue a culture of ensuring security at the lowest possible level of armaments. Successes in bilateral negotiations on nuclear weapons, conventional forces in Europe and chemical weapons prove that it is a feasible goal.

Nepal deems it extremely significant that all five nuclear-weapon States are now parties to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. We have long advocated an early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Meaningful progress in this area will have important implications for the review and extension Conference on the non-proliferation Treaty.

Protection of human rights has emerged as an important factor in the development of friendly relations among States. The United Nations must spare no effort in establishing an international norm of human rights. The World Conference on Human Rights was a major step in this direction. Human rights cannot be secure without a universal conscience on the part of all peoples to uphold each other's rights in full understanding of the just demands of the individual, the community, the State and the international order. Human rights cannot be secured unless there is an absolute freedom from fear from any source. There is a direct correlation between the status of human rights, the democratic process and an evolution of a culture of peaceful settlement of disputes. The threat to peace is the greatest when human rights are denied.

The world is at a vital turning-point. The old order has come to an end while the new has yet to take shape. While some old contradictions persist and new ones appear, some unexpected bright areas have also dawned. Nepal welcomes the agreement reached by the negotiating parties in South Africa to hold an election in April 1994. We share the deep concern of the international community over the continued violence which threatens the peaceful transition of South Africa to a non-racial democratic society.

Nepal has long enjoyed friendship with both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. We welcome the Declaration of Principles as well as the exchange of letters of mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The statesmanship shown by the leaders of Israel and the PLO promises a new beginning for the Middle East and, indeed, the world. We earnestly hope that this historic breakthrough will facilitate the search for a comprehensive and lasting solution of the Middle East problem.

As I come towards the end of my statement, I wish to extend to you, Sir, my hearty congratulations on your election to the high office of President of the General Assembly at a time when the United Nations is passing through a very important phase in its history. I also take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. Stoyan Ganev for his stewardship of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

I must also take this opportunity to pay our warmest tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His efforts to reform and strengthen the United Nations with the courage of conviction have been universally appreciated. We are impressed by his vision and dynamism, which are necessary for the United Nations to cope with the new realities and challenges of our time. Mr. Boutros-Ghali was a well-known figure in my country even before he became the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We consider him to be a sincere friend of Nepal.

Although small in military and economic strength, Nepal is fully alive to its responsibilities as a Member of this world Organization. Nepal will not hesitate to take an independent and objective stand in favour of larger good and justice. For us, the Charter of the United Nations captures the highest ideals of mankind. I take this opportunity to rededicate the commitment of the people and the Government of Nepal to the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Nepal for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Nepal, was escorted from the rostrum.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. Barrow (Belize): The delegation of Belize takes immense pride, Sir, in your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. This is the first time in the history of the Organization that a Commonwealth Caribbean national has been chosen to superintend the deliberations of the General Assembly. Your election is, thus, not only the highest tribute that could have been paid you, but is also the accomplishment of your country, Guyana, and of the wider Commonwealth Caribbean. As a part of the latter, Belize may be forgiven for any note of self-congratulation that creeps into the encomiums we heap upon you today.

In that regard - and we say this only slightly with tongue in cheek - we note that almost your first act of wisdom upon assuming office was the selection of a very excellent Belizean as presidential spokesperson.

Let me at this time also record my delegation's appreciation of the most able manner in which the outgoing President, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, conducted the work of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

In addition, may I take the opportunity to welcome formally to the United Nations family the six countries - the Czech Republic, Eritrea, Monaco, the Slovak Republic, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Andorra - which have joined the Organization this year.

Allow me also to offer, on behalf of the people and the Government of Belize, our deep sympathy to the people and the Government of India for the heavy death toll and considerable material loss caused by the devastating earthquake on 30 September.

Over the five years since I last appeared in this Hall, many things have changed in the world. In Belize we, too, have experienced change. On 30 June 1993 the people of Belize voted, through peaceful elections, for a new government. Once more we have demonstrated the stability of our democratic institutions and the maturity of our polity. In an age when the so-called global trend towards democratization seems at times to be a process that moves one step forward and two steps back, we in Belize are justly proud of our record.

In these five years, some of the changes occurring in the global prospect have been favourable, and many of these are attributable to this Organization, which, under its distinguished Secretary-General, has been striving to fulfil the mandate of its Charter and find ways and means to cope with problems not necessarily envisaged by the framers of that Charter.

In the brief *tour d'horizon* of the international scene which I shall undertake today, the first matter I wish to address is peace and security. We are very gratified by the positive developments that have occurred in several places. Uppermost in our minds is our own subregion of Central America. There we have been heartened by the movement of several of our neighbours towards reconciliation and social justice.

In particular, we note with satisfaction that the brief hiccup of the events in the Republic of Guatemala in May and June does not appear to have seriously flawed that country's efforts at permanent redemocratization. We are happy that the new government there has publicly confirmed Guatemala's recognition of sovereign and independent Belize. Diplomatic relations between our two countries can once again proceed apace; and we shall continue the work for the preservation of bilateral and regional security and the search for a lasting solution to the issues that still bedevil us. In accordance with the principles enunciated by this Organization, such a solution must be on the basis of mutual respect for peace, for the rights of both countries to self-determination and for the integrity of each other's land and sea territory.

In the Caribbean we have hopes that the long-suffering people of Haiti will be rewarded by the return of its legitimate government.

Recent developments in South Africa are clearly very encouraging, and we are confident of the success of the transition to majority rule, which will be heralded by the non-racial elections scheduled for April 1994.

Then, in the midst of continued strife in the Middle East, we believe we see positive signs of the way forward with the dramatic opening between the people of Palestine and the State of Israel. At long last there seems a real possibility of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination coexisting with the State of Israel's right to safe and secure borders.

We welcome the finalization of the demarcation of the boundary between Kuwait and Iraq, which was

accomplished by the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission on 20 May 1993. We also welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 833 (1993), in which it guaranteed the inviolability of the boundary between the two States.

Encouraging, too, has been the consolidation of the broad consultative mechanisms for confidence-building, security, human rights and cooperation originally established for Europe in the Helsinki Conference and now substantially expanded. Such structures have considerable value, and we understand that our colleagues in the countries members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are in the process of developing a similar mechanism with a distinct ASEAN character. Above all, we commend the Secretary-General for his vision in "An Agenda for Peace".

Despite all these promising developments, however, the overall outlook for world security remains bleak. In far too many places the peace is disrupted by fratricidal struggle. Everywhere the crushing burden of armaments - to employ a famous expression used by President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill in 1941 - bids to drive our planet off its established course. The Second World War was partly fought, and this great Organization was largely established, to eradicate programmes of ethnic genocide. Now, nearly 50 years after the birth of the United Nations, we are experiencing several such programmes on a massive scale.

I urge that during this session we take the first major step to right these imbalances, which affect global peace and security. Just as the Helsinki model is one way forward, we hope that another is the International Tribunal on war crimes, the judges of which this Assembly recently elected.

Among other steps which might be taken are the following: Governments must forswear profiteering from the sale or sponsorship of the sale of armaments. There must be an expansion of regional and subregional systems of cooperation and coordination in the cognate areas of security, narcotics interdiction and counter-terrorism. This body must make firm recommendations for the development and rigid enforcement of domestic neutrality laws everywhere. Likewise, the international law relating to neutrality must be thoroughly modernized to proscribe and severely punish trafficking in arms. This must be not only in situations of belligerency, but also in cases of insurgency, rebellion and other armed conflict, both internal and international. The recent salutary reinvigoration of this Organization's peace-keeping mechanisms must be furthered.

This is a time when the United Nations is increasingly being called upon to act as a peacemaker in troubled and turbulent regions of the world. It is to the Organization's credit that it has risen to the occasion by undertaking complex and challenqinq assignments around the globe.

There was a time when United Nations peace-keeping forces could successfully be composed of contingents from the so-called third world countries. But recent experience has now shown that large and difficult operations of the Bosnia and Somalia type stand little chance of success without the active participation of major Powers. In this context, we welcome President Clinton's speech in this session of the Assembly, offering to commit United States troops to the United Nations Bosnia operation under certain conditions.

Yet there is still a role for small States. And we in Belize would be prepared to offer training facilities to the Organization as a contribution to increasing the efficiency of peace-keeping forces. This would be in accordance with Article 43 of the Charter, which calls for member Governments to make available to the Security Council "assistance and facilities ... necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security". Needless to say, we would be happy to make our contribution in concert with other countries in our area. Either pre-existing regional security mechanisms and/or new bilateral and multilateral arrangements might serve as the vehicle for small country efforts at cooperation.

As a backdrop to all this, the provisions of the Charter relative to peacemaking must be strengthened. In particular, a standing United Nations force under unified United Nations command should be considered and the Military Staff Committee must be made fully operational. In keeping with the Secretary-General's quest to improve efficiencies, strict military discipline of United Nations forces must be established and there must be improved coordination at Headquarters and in the field.

The most important of the steps which my Government believes should be taken is reform of the Security Council. It is self-evident that in these times of turmoil and increased United Nations activity the agenda item of equitable representation on, and increase in membership of, the Council looms large. Belize has recently submitted a paper to the Secretary-General, detailing our ideas on this all-important topic.

I wish to turn next to international cooperation. I believe that there exists an international legal obligation to cooperate in good faith. It is anticipated in the Articles on principles and purposes and other provisions of the United Nations Charter, and is reiterated in such Declarations as the friendly relations Declaration of 1970 and the 1974 Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. I will address the question of economic cooperation at a later stage in my remarks. At this point, I wish to train the spotlight on cooperation in the area of ecospheric concerns.

As regards the ecosphere, Belize considers that the early and universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is of paramount importance. It will be recalled that the Convention imposes myriad duties of cooperation. In that way, the weak, and not only the strong and mighty, will inherit the Earth and its waters.

We have seen two recent examples of successful efforts at cooperation in the ecosphere. The first involves the ozone layer. In that connection, intensive cooperation by Governments and by private industry, pursuant to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, as amended, has led to a significant decline in the rate of expansion of the hole in the ozone layer.

My other example is the cooperation of foreign and domestic agencies with the Governments of my country, Belize and Costa Rica, which has contributed to substantial success in our conservation efforts. Cognizant of these successes, we appeal for intensive cooperation in all aspects of the ecosphere, including the termination of ocean and terrestrial dumping, the halt of desertification and the reduction of the causes of global warming. We also hope for a concrete programme of action at next April's Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States to be held in Barbados.

One area in which we must redouble our efforts at cooperation is the moral environment. In numerous Member countries the people have clamoured for cessation of corrupt practices in government and business, both national and international. Now, we are extremely happy to observe that the Secretary-General has established the new post of Assistant Secretary-General for Inspections and Investigations. In so doing, he has made it clear that the moral environment of our organization must be sanitized. We must support him in this endeavour. At the same time, we lend our voice to those who call for the accountability of all inter-governmental organizations to independent auditors and inspectors.

My Government attaches the greatest importance to integrity and decency in public life. We applaud such international efforts as the forthcoming anti-corruption conference to be held in Mexico later this year to plan national strategies for fighting corruption. And we in Belize have recently taken our own action to strengthen the legal infrastructure necessary to banish the scourge of political corruption. In just three months since taking office, we have introduced four major pieces of legislation in our Parliament. They are the Prevention of Corruption in Public Life Bill, the Ombudsman Bill, the Contractor General Bill and the Freedom of Information Bill. This last, as far as we can determine, is the only one of its kind in the entire Commonwealth Carribean. These measures bear testimony to my Government's determination to wage a total war on corruption and to make Belize the model of a just, honest and democratic society.

I turn next to issues relating to international development and economic relations. For over 30 years, the Organization has painstakingly sought to spell out that the right to development and the duty of the privileged to assist the underprivileged are firmly based in international law and public policies. This right and duty were part of the "freedom from want" principle, one of the founding principles of the 1942 wartime coalition that was the first to be called the "United Nations". Freedom from want had nothing to do with ideology and great-Power rivalry. Nevertheless, there have been dramatic ideological, geopolitical and economic changes during the late 1980s. As these changes have occurred, needs have increased but resources have not. Yet we have heard rumours that various initiatives to bring economic justice to this planet are no longer necessary.

I respectfully suggest that nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, such controversial movements as the one to establish a new international economic order were merely, as we have intimated, the reiteration of an established principle. That is, those initiatives were the renewal of an order, not a new order. Furthermore, in the original Somalia intervention, we see strong confirmation of the continuing vitality of the principle of "freedom from want" - for all of us will remember that the avowed objective of the current exercises in that beleaguered country was to bring food, comfort and succour to its suffering people.

Thus, I believe, we are seeing the reaffirmation of freedom from want as a human right. At the same time, I would urge the Assembly to take firm steps to ensure that

food no longer be used as a weapon by parties to civil and international conflicts.

In all this we are acutely aware of the shift in world trading patterns brought on by the formation of new trading blocs. The most recent and prominent of these are of course the North American Free Trade Agreement among Mexico, the United States of America and Canada, and the Single European Market. And so, in some areas at least, the march towards wider trade liberalization and true market economy moves inexorably forward. But we in the South also see that our economies and life as we know them are threatened by these developments; our preferential access to markets steadily erodes and our terms of trade consistently worsen.

What we are in fact concerned about here is the pressure to open up our borders prematurely to the free flow of agricultural and other products from the more developed countries. It is a bitter pill to swallow, even as we watch the protectionist squabbling among developed countries that has prevented the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Of course, it would also result in massive economic dislocation followed inevitably by social and political unrest in our countries.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge that we must in the long run identify alternative commodities that we can produce efficiently and with comparative advantage. I must stress, however, that we are hard pressed to find the resources required for comprehensive research, development and promotion programmes for new products. We must be afforded an adequate transition period to adjust our economic and production activities. I would wish, therefore, to take this opportunity to call on the countries members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to identify and dedicate significant financial and technical resources to assist small countries in developing alternative products. Of course, current trends in official and private financial flows to the developing world suggest that this is a cry that will fall largely on deaf ears.

On a more positive note, permit me at this juncture to applaud the apparent resolve of the United Nations organs for development assistance to improve their efforts at coordination. In this connection, I single out for special mention the Secretary- General's ongoing formulation of an agenda for development and the determined spirit of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to strengthen its mission and revamp its machinery. This, however, is but a beginning of what must be a crusade for development.

The last set of issues I shall address are social, political, cultural and humanitarian. First, we must do much more to ensure that women are accorded their proper rights in the domestic and international orders. No longer should we merely echo the litany that women's development is indispensable for economic development. We must ensure that women are accorded equal rights in all spheres. Furthermore, they must urgently be given equal representation in our political, social, cultural and other institutions. Again, I take note of the recent efforts of this Organization to improve the position of women in the upper echelons of the United Nations Secretariat.

As regards refugees, it would be disingenuous to call for their enhanced protection without acknowledging the severe problems which host countries increasingly face. For instance, we in Belize do the best we can, but overcrowding a slender raft - even in a relative haven of calm - can bring dire consequences to all its occupants.

Nevertheless, I am happy to report to this Assembly that Belize's record of human rights is good and worthy of emulation. Our Constitution is founded on the principles of justice and respect for the fundamental freedoms of all our people, and our laws and practices fully conform to the mandate of our Constitution.

The international scourge of narcotics continues unabated. Again, we add our voices to those who urge that at least the same degree of attention be given to curbing demand and improving public health, as to addressing supply. Narcotics, terrorism and urban violence are all gross manifestations of an awful cancer seeking to engulf our planet. One clear contributor to this is the mass and universal culture, or what passes for culture, purveyed by the moguls of television. While we welcome the utility of the new global news channels, we lament the other, baneful, influences to which our people are subjected by some aspects of worldwide programming. It is high time that this Organization tackle this problem.

Finally, as regards human riqhts and humanitarian law, even over the brief period of five years since I last addressed this body, we have witnessed significant expansion in the activities of the Commission on Human Rights and the bodies established under the various United Nations instruments for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. We have seen this Organization, on

invitation, participate in monitoring and conducting elections and, in the unprecedented case of Cambodia, actually administer a country prior to the holding of democratic elections. Yet the basic rights of human beings in numerous places are still seriously impaired. Many of those who should protect, in fact violate. And conferences, tribunals and conventions bring scarce relief.

In the realm of humanitarian law, we are hopeful that the International Tribunal on war crimes will set a healthy precedent. Nevertheless, we view with increasing concern the flouting of the Geneva regime, especially the 1977 Protocols applicable to various forms of civil strife. That regime is the other side of the coin of human rights. Whichever side comes up when that coin is tossed, it comes up tarnished.

Clearly, despite a somewhat mixed record, the United Nations is no moribund organization. Nevertheless, as it nears its golden jubilee, it does require additional impetus, a more focused consensus for reform and revitalization. Let all of us, then, as we go about the business of this forty-eighth session, bear well in mind the words of the Preamble to the Charter and accordingly pledge our rededication to the task of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights and equality, and creating the moral climate in which justice and international law will finally prevail.

Mr. ALLAGANY (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is with pleasure that I convey to Your Excellency at the outset of my statement, our sincerest congratulations on your election to the Presidency of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Your election reflects appreciation for you personally, as well as for the positive role played by your country in the international arena. I wish you every success in the pursuit of your mission.

On this occasion, I also wish to congratulate your predecessor for his effective guidance of the affairs of the General Assembly at its previous session.

I also wish to acknowledge the sincere efforts constantly exerted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to enhance the prospects for peace and reduce the elements of tension which prevail in many parts of the world.

I am also pleased to welcome, on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, all the States that have joined our Organization to participate, along with all other Member States, in realizing the noble objectives towards which we all strive.

This session of the General Assembly takes place amidst important developments in the international arena that require us to strive to conclude our work with successful resolutions on the problems and crises we face. These resolutions must be within the context of our efforts to benefit from the opportunities provided by the emergence of what has come to be known as the new international order.

We have all contributed, through the United Nations to establishing the new international order, the foundations of which are based on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and inherent in international law. This new order respects the sovereignty and independence of States and guarantees the inviolability of their international borders. It guarantees the territorial integrity of States and rejects interference in their domestic affairs. It is based on equity among nations, small and large, rich and poor, and its goal is to replace war and destruction with cooperation between nations and peoples. The new international order strives for the peaceful resolution of conflict and rejects the use of force or coercion. It operates to preserve the dignity of man and to spread security, stability, prosperity and development to all corners of our world.

The emergence of this new order has been a source of hope and optimism for the international community, particularly when serious and constructive international cooperation succeeded in confronting the Iraqi aggression against the State of Kuwait. Today, however, we are saddened and pained by the inability of this order to confront the aggression committed against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a State Member of our international Organization. This crisis, if not resolved in a manner compatible with the principles of the new world order, will cause this new order to lose its credibility and effectiveness. We therefore call for enhancing the role of the United Nations from one of mere crisis management and maintenance of peace to one of active and effective peacemaking.

A general overview of the current international situation reveals that there remain pockets of tension which threaten security and stability in many regions of the world. With the persistence of such challenges, the role of the United Nations is becoming increasingly important, not only for the maintenance of peace, but as an effective means for creating conditions conducive to peace and

stability throughout the world. Without a doubt, the creation of such conditions will be made much easier if the opportunities for cooperation between nations are increased and support for the United Nations is strengthened so that the Organization may function in a manner that would guarantee that no country commits aggression against another or threatens its security, sovereignty or territorial integrity.

The honourable role played by the United Nations more than three years ago when it stood firmly in the face of Iraq's aggression against its neighbour Kuwait, and the resolutions it adopted led in the end to repelling aggression and restoring legality to Kuwait the peace-loving nation. This positive role portrays our expectations of this international body in the present circumstances. We hope that it will continue to be played and ask that it be enhanced by efforts to ensure the complete implementation of all Security Council resolutions regarding the Iraqi regime, which continues to flout international legality. Two years after the liberation of Kuwait, the Baghdad regime continues to resort to threats and false allegations against Kuwait. It continues to delay efforts to implement United Nations resolutions and rejects all international obligations. We point in particular to the Iraqi regime's objections to the recommendations of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission and its rejection of Security Council resolution 833 (1993), as well as its continued detention of Kuwaiti hostages and prisoners of war. This regime has arrogated the right, on the basis of sovereignty, to starve and abuse its people and subject Iraq to dangers which threaten its unity and security. It falsely blames the international community for the dangers and tragedies to which Iraq and its people have become subject. The surest way of facing up to the threats this regime poses to the region as a whole, and to the Iraqi people is to fully and completely implement Security Council resolutions.

The Declaration of Principles between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli Government, signed in Washington, D.C. on 13 September 1993, has raised expectations and hopes that a just and permanent settlement can be found to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has persisted for far too long. This development, though representing only an agreement on autonomy in the occupied Palestinian territories, beginning with Gaza and Jericho, nevertheless represents a step towards the establishment of a just, comprehensive and permanent peace between the Arab States and Israel. A solution to the Palestinian question will obviously contribute to a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict as it is the core issue of that conflict.

The warm welcome with which the Palestinian-Israeli agreement was received within Palestinian, Arab and international circles genuinely and clearly reflects the desire of the Arabs to establish a permanent, just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It also indicates the seriousness with which the Arab side has pursued the current peace process, which was launched in Madrid in October 1991 under the sponsorship of the United States of America and the Russian Federation.

As we witness today the optimism generated by the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, we cannot but feel that it is incumbent upon the international community to lend support to the progress that has been achieved in this area by providing the necessary economic and developmental assistance required to build the administrative structures needed to make the agreement on self-rule succeed. At the same time, it is also incumbent upon us to work diligently to exploit the momentum generated by this agreement in furthering the cause of peace.

The consolidation of this step requires the achievement of tangible and positive results in the areas of negotiation between Palestinians and Israelis; at the forefront of those are the issue of Al-Quds, which is an integral part of the occupied Arab territories, the issue of the return of Palestinian refugees, and the settlements built by Israel in the occupied Arab territories contrary to international law and the Geneva Conventions. At the same time, genuine progress along all the other bilateral negotiating tracks is needed.

The issue of the occupied Arab Syrian Golan Heights is clear: it is governed by the principle of respect for international borders. The maintenance of security is not feasible, as the realities of contemporary history teach us, through the occupation of territory by force, but rather through the establishment of peace. Thus, peace on this front will be achieved only by a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights.

Likewise, the Lebanese-Israeli negotiating track is governed by United Nations Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which clearly calls for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory.

I wish to express the appreciation of the Government of the Custodian of the two holy mosques to President

Clinton for his prudent initiative in calling for, and hosting, an international donors' conference to solicit political and financial support for the Palestinians as they prepare to assume the responsibilities of self-rule in the occupied territories. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our pleasure at the positive results achieved at that conference.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has given, and continues to give, its full support in all possible forms to the Middle East peace process since it began in Madrid. It has participated effectively in the multilateral talks, and genuinely hopes that the process will lead to a just, permanent and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question and the Arab conflict with Israel on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Despite the financial burdens the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia bears in building an advanced economy in which the expectations of its citizens for a better future are fulfilled, and despite its current international obligations at a time of difficulty in the international economic system, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participated in the international donors' conference that recently concluded its meetings in Washington.

The Custodian of the two holy mosques has bestowed upon me the honour of announcing the Kingdom's commitment to providing substantial developmental assistance to improve the infrastructures in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in coordination and cooperation with the World Bank's special five-year programme for the occupied territories. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will participate, through the Saudi development fund, to the tune of $100 million for the year 1994. We believe that this assistance will improve the living conditions of our Palestinian brethren in the occupied Arab territories and contribute positively to the peace process.

The Lebanese Government has made great strides in its efforts to implement the Taif Accords, and has taken the necessary political and constitutional measures to achieve this aim. We must continue our support for the efforts of the legitimate Lebanese authorities and contribute to the process of reconstruction in Lebanon.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia appeals to the international community to help Lebanon by all available means in order to enable its Government to continue moving forward with the process of reconstruction and allow Lebanon to regain its material and cultural position.

It is important to reiterate the need, if this goal is to be achieved, for an Israeli commitment to implement, fully and unconditionally, United Nations Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which requires Israel to withdraw from Lebanese territory to enable the Lebanese Government to extend its legal authority over all Lebanon.

We should like to emphasize our desire for the Middle East region to obtain its legitimate share of security, peace and stability so that it is able to direct all its energies towards development and devote all its resources towards prosperity for its people.

One of the most important tasks facing us in this respect is to strive towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a signatory to the Convention on the non-proliferation of chemical weapons and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We continue to believe that the goal of making the Middle East a region free of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological, will be realized only when all States in the region, including Israel, refrain from the production, stockpiling, or possession of any kind of weapon of mass destruction.

The situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is being aggravated by the continuation of a genocidal war waged by Serb forces, with the support of Serbia and Montenegro, against that young Republic. The continuing tragedy of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has resulted in the death of thousands of innocent civilians and the displacement of a large portion of its citizens, would not have occurred were it not for the apparent indifference of the international community. This attitude allowed the forces of aggression to benefit from their aggression, and to continue their abhorrent policy of "ethnic cleansing" without fear of retribution.

This feeble stand on the part the international community, particularly the European countries, was reflected in the inability to implement comprehensively the resolutions of the London Conference, upon which we had rested great hopes. It is also reflected in the failure of the Vance-Owen plan and the collapse of the subsequent Geneva talks on refugees.

The international community's dereliction of its responsibilities *vis-á-vis* the Serb aggression has emboldened the Croats to embark upon a similar course of making gains by means of force and coercion.

Against such a backdrop, it was strange indeed that when Croatia was targeted by Serbian aggression, the international community, and especially the European nations, were quick to stand by Croatia and provide military assistance that contributed to the success of international efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement, whereas the international community's feeble stance in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its failure to implement the international resolutions calling for the imposition of economic sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro, have deprived that young Republic of the means of exercising its legitimate right to self-defence. Those resolutions and the sanctions they call for remained dead letter and were not seriously implemented until it was too late, after the Serbs had rejected the Vance-Owen Plan, which the Bosnians and Croats had accepted. What really shocks and amazes us is that this war of aggression is being waged on the European soil whereas history teaches us that such wars on that soil have never been limited wars but have always overspilled beyond the borders. However, no one seems to be paying any attention to those object-lessons.

While we hope that the history of Europe's wars will not repeat itself, we hope that the solutions that are being proposed do not turn out to be the seeds of future conflicts and disputes. We hope that the international community will give serious consideration to the demands of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina so that it may be saved from any repetition of the policies of aggression and "ethnic cleansing". The geographical demands of that young nation should be satisfied by granting it access to the sea as well as providing it with the means of legitimate self-defence, in consonance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The principled stand by the people and Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in support of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina emanates from their strong and total adherence to international legality and respect for international law and not from any religious fanaticism or ethnic affinity. It is the same principled stand that was taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in support of Kuwait when it fell victim to the Iraqi regime's aggression.

Somalia continues to be in the grip of instability and political chaos, with all the attendant acts of violence and bloodshed, despite all the efforts deployed to help that nation out of its plight. International efforts, during the Conference for National Reconciliation held at Addis Ababa, focused on the preservation of the Somali State and the maintenance of its independence and territorial integrity. Unfortunately, the required steps have not been taken for the serious implementation of that Agreement. The role of the United Nations has been limited to the distribution of humanitarian assistance to those in need at a time when the role it is expected to play within the new world order is to contribute to peacemaking and to the stabilization of the Somali State. Such measures should help to establish a Somali Government that can extend its authority throughout Somalia.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made a number of attempts to contain the conflict in Somalia and has tried to bring about national reconciliation among the various factions. It will continue to deploy efforts to stop the bloodshed and to provide humanitarian assistance and relief. We support the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report to the Security Council, on the means of helping re-establish Somalia's constitutional institutions and on the efforts needed to reach national reconciliation and to rebuild Somalia.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stood by the fraternal people of Afghanistan throughout their *jihad* and celebrated with them their victory over the forces of brutal occupation in the struggle for restoring their national identity. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia spared no effort in working for reconciliation when the infighting started between the various mujahidin factions. Those efforts were crowned with the signing of the Mecca Agreement and the initiation of steps towards its implementation. A National Government that combined all factions of the Afghan mujahidin was established. We take this opportunity to urge our brethren in Afghanistan to comply with the terms of the agreement so that Afghanistan may begin to move towards reconstruction and development and regain its place and role in the international community.

It must be noted that that part of the world continues to suffer as a result of the problem of Jammu and Kashmir, which continues to be an element of instability in the region. The Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques follows with great concern the ongoing violence there. We are keen on finding a solution on the basis of United Nations resolutions to this long-standing problem that has overshadowed the relations of the two neighbours, India and Pakistan.

Among the other conflicts in Asia I would refer to the tragic developments resulting from the worsening conflict between two United Nations Member States, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia. That conflict has recently resulted in the occupation by Armenia of parts of Azerbaijan. We consider that occupation to be a breach of the principle of the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and emphasize the importance of withdrawal by Armenia's forces from Azerbaijan's territory in order to transfer that issue to the negotiating table with the aim of reaching a peaceful and just settlement that would ensure the legitimate rights of the people of Azerbaijan.

Our joint and serious efforts towards consolidating the underpinnings of the new world order aim at making it possible to address the issues of development and the creation of an international economic environment in which financial resources would be diverted from arms races to economic and social development. Those efforts are in keeping with our ambitions and the aspirations of our peoples for a better world of peace, prosperity and security. Such an enterprise requires the cooperation of the developed industrial nations by opening their markets to the products of the developing nations, the elimination of protectionist measures, ensuring an early successful outcome to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade talks and finding an urgent, rapid solution to the debt problem. On the other hand, economic cooperation between the developing countries themselves is a paramount issue and represents a fundamental tool for consolidating international economic growth.

My Government attaches great importance to issues relating to the world economic system. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represents a State open to the world, interacting with all the trends and developments that affect it. Thus, we are keen on preserving the health and strength of the world economy, and we are concerned by the disruptions and turmoil that affect its course and development. It is on that basis that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is participating positively in the ongoing discussions on energy and environment. We have shouldered our responsibilities in this regard and have played an active role in international discussions to find a workable and balanced solution to global warming based on proven scientific evidence. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is convinced that the future of this world, its prosperity, and the well-being of its inhabitants, depend on a clear understanding of the environmental problems that face us all and on fully understanding the consequences of the policies adopted in dealing with those problems.

This requires delicate balancing of the burdens and commitments of each and every State in addressing problems of the environment. Due consideration should be given also to the situation of every energy producing or consumer developing country and the effects of environmental policies on the economic growth of those countries. Such an approach will certainly contribute to the achievement of comprehensive development and to the betterment of our peoples' standards of living so that they may all enjoy prosperity, peace, security and stability. The current international circumstances, resulting from the ending of the cold war, together with the progress achieved in arms control and reductions of conventional weapons afford us a rare opportunity for channelling the financial windfall towards solving the problems of development and economic backwardness.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been at the forefront of Islamic States that have adhered to the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, issued by the Organization of the Islamic Conference on 5 August 1990. This Cairo Declaration should be regarded as a tributary providing the proper foundation for positive and practical international cooperation and flowing into the main stream of universal support for human rights and freedoms.

Most particularly, the Declaration expresses the will of over 1 billion people, which by any measure grants it a universal character. While the principles and objectives of human rights are universal in nature, their application must take into consideration the diversity of societies and their historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds and legal systems. We should not rush to the creation of mechanisms that would only deepen differences and disregard the sort of sensitivities that became noticeable during the World Conference on Human Rights that was held recently in Vienna.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a developing society firmly based on the rules that constitute the pillars of Islamic civilization. It is a society that has firmly set itself to face up to the challenges of our times with determination and confidence, and it is a society undergoing evolution and significant reform. Its reforms are guided by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aiz, and embodied in the basic laws of governance, the Charter of the Majlis al-Shura - the consultative council - and the laws of the provinces. These laws place upon the State the primary responsibility for the protection of human rights in accordance with the Islamic Shariah and determine the relationship between ruler and

ruled on the basis of brotherhood, consultation, loyalty and cooperation.

I am pleased to inform this body that the members of the Majlis al-Shura and those of the provincial councils have been named. These institutions are now making serious preparations to embark upon their appointed tasks and to serve their faith, their King, and their nation. This important step in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's development paves the way for participation by Saudi citizens in sharing the responsibility for confidently building a promising and hopeful future.

The political and economic challenges we face which abound on this session's agenda, put a great burden of responsibility on us all towards our peoples and nations. Our common future will depend on the way we face up to those challenges. In the light of the current international situation and of the emergence of a new international outlook which rejects fanaticism and ossification and confirms a desire for openness and progress, we harbour great hopes that we shall be able to surmount those challenges. In so doing, we must take into consideration the fact that the new international order will not be able to provide us with the peace, justice and development we desire unless we give it the opportunity to do just that.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.